

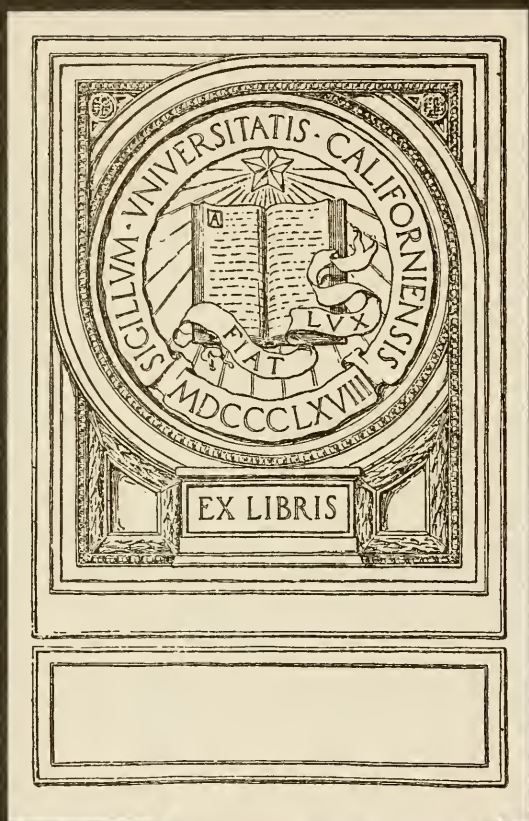
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THE POLISH NATION

BY

WINCENTY LUTOSŁAWSKI

A LECTURE DELIVERED

*at the Lowell Institute in Boston on October 21, 1907,
and at the University of California on March 9, 1908.*

PRICE : Two shillings.

PRIX : 2 fr. 50.

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PARIS
BOYVEAU ET CHEVILLET
22, RUE DE LA BANQUE, 22

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1917

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THE POLISH NATION

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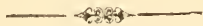
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PREFACE

This is the introduction to a course of lectures given at the Lowell Institute in Boston in October and November 1907. Every word said then remains true to-day, and though the truth about Poland continues to be strangely ignored alike by historians, statesmen and the Press, the war of 1914 has done much to call universal attention to a country which has suffered materially and morally more than Belgium, Serbia or Armenia, because its inhabitants, homes and crops have been destroyed not only by the invading enemy, but also by the retreating ally, and in several districts this has happened more than once.

Poland is the only great nation which has been compelled by her political situation to divide her manhood between the conflicting hosts, as nearly 800.000 Poles have been enrolled in the Russian army and about the same number in the Austro-German forces.

Most serious thinkers agree that the war is carried on chiefly in defence of certain principles of western civilisation which may be thus formulated :

1. Every nation has the right to chose its own rulers.

2. No nation has a right to rule over other nations against their will.

3. Every individual has certain individual rights that should be respected by the State.

For this cause already the battles of Marathon and Salamis were fought, and the inheritance of Greek ideals of liberty helped Switzerland and the Netherlands to emancipate themselves from foreign domination. Poland fought for the same cause at Lignica in 1240 against the Tartars, at Warna in 1444 and at Vienna in 1683 against the Turks, at Grünwald in 1410 against the German Order, at Orsza (1514), Psków (1581), Kłuszyn (1610), Ochmatów (1655), Grochów and Ostrołęka (1831) against the Muscovites. And, while defending Europe against oriental invasions, Poland elaborated within its own large republican commonwealth the Slavic ideals of freedom, with far greater regard for the rights of every individual than could be found in the Germanic states built on the ruins of the Roman empire.

With the small republics of Switzerland and Holland, Poland was for many centuries the most faithful heir to Greco-Roman republican ideals on the Continent of Europe, and this at a time when France and Spain were ruled by absolute monarchs, when Italy was deprived of national unity and Germany divided by religious wars.

The most important step in the direction of national liberty in Europe was the federation of Poland with Lithuania and Ruthenia, created in 1386, solemnly confirmed in 1413, 1501, and 1569 by public unanimous decisions, and later again ratified in 1794, 1831, 1863 by the

active participation of Ruthenians and Lithuanians in the Polish revolutions against foreign oppression.

This union of two States inhabited by three different populations, extended the political liberty of the Poles to an area six times larger than that covered by Poland before the xivth century. Poland might have become the nucleus of a larger federation, comprising Bohemia, Rumania and Hungary, and granting the greatest liberty to each member, had it not succumbed to an unprecedented conspiracy of three neighbouring states, ruled by German sovereigns, who united their forces in order to destroy Polish liberty at a time when France was awakening to the necessity of suppressing her absolute monarchy.

To explain this fact we must remember that long before western civilisation was inaugurated in Greece, there existed an opposite tendency, which we call oriental despotism, and which may be formulated as follows :

1. Every strong state has the right to rob its weaker neighbours of their property, life and freedom (*Raubritterei*).

2. For this purpose every individual must obey the ruling dynasty, which has a divine right over the State, and grants to individuals and corporations only such revocable rights as are advantageous to the ruler (*Feudalism*).

3. National aspirations which separate the subjects of one sovereign and weaken the State are evil and must be suppressed by any and every means (*Germanisation* and *Russification*—*Pangermanism* and *Panslavism*).

These oriental dogmas were unknown to the original

Celtic and Slavic populations of Europe. They were of Turanian origin, accepted among the Aryans by the Persians in their wars against the Greeks, and, later, imported into Western Europe by the German Barbarians who destroyed the Roman Empire and created on its ruins a number of kingdoms in almost constant warfare.

Most ruling dynasties in Europe are even now of German origin, and German feudalism has prevailed throughout Europe except in Poland, which has never been conquered by the Germans as were France, Spain, Italy and Great Britain. Centuries of inner struggles were necessary before the power of dynasties could be broken in Western Europe by the rising wave of popular indignation.

In the struggle between German emperors and Roman Popes, the Emperors represented oriental despotism, the Popes the Western respect for universal law. Poland was the only country independent of the Germans in Central Europe, and the federation of Poland and Lithuania excited envy and hate among the German dynasties, increased when the Lithuanian Jagellons ruled also in Bohemia and Hungary in the xvth century.

The old German dynasty of the Habsburgs conquered these countries not by the force of arms but by marriages. When Louis, the last Polish King of Bohemia and Hungary fell in 1526 at the battle of Mohacz, in defence of western civilisation against the Turks, oriental despotism invaded these two free countries under Ferdinand, husband of the last king's sister Anna, grand daughter of Casimir, king of Poland.

This was a great victory of the Habsburgs over the

Jagellons. But a greater triumph of German despotism was the pacific conquest by marriage of the Turanian state of Muscovy, the eastern neighbour of Poland. This was brought about by a German princess, the daughter of a Prussian officer, Sophie von Anhalt Zerbst, who, owing to the protection of Frederick II of Prussia, married in 1745 Peter von Holstein Gottorp and, after his assassination, became in 1762 empress. Known as Catherine II, she started a new dynasty in Russia.

It is to her that oriental despotism owes its greatest success in Europe : the destruction of the Polish Republic which had been for four hundred years the stoutest enemy of despotism.

The consequences of the partitions of Poland were far-reaching. So successful an example of lawlessness excited everywhere dynastic ambitions of conquest, and the three states which divided Poland continued to annex other territories until 1914. Their craving for territorial expansion is acknowledged as one of the chief causes of the world-war.

The whole career of Napoleon would have been different without the partitions of Poland. He had to defend France against the three powers which owed their military importance to Poland's destruction. With a free Polish Republic as a natural ally of the French Republic, most of the Napoleonic wars would have been superfluous, and the French Revolution would have led to the abolition of dynastic rule in Europe.

In his struggle against three greedy dynasties, Napoleon succumbed to the temptation of founding his own dynasty and this ruined his true mission which was to establish na-

tional liberty in Europe on the basis of western civilisation. The example of Napoleon was again an encouragement for further Prussian conquests in 1864-1871 which completed the work begun by the partitions of Poland.

The growth of the German dynastic empires, in close relation with their eastern ally, became a standing menace to liberty in Europe. That eastern ally of the German empires had a German dynasty, a German bureaucracy and many Germans in the Army and Navy, but when this greatest continental Empire was beaten by the small insular constitutional state of Japan, the Germans did not move to save their faithful ally of one and a half century.

For some time it seemed as if Russia had renounced German despotism and accepted from Japan the principles of western civilisation — but this did not last long, and, in the last ten years before the world-war, most of the true Slavs, such as the Poles, the Ruthenes, the Bohemians, the Croats, lived under oppression ; the Serbs were only nominally free. Great Powers alone had a right to existence ; all smaller states had to fear the fate of Poland.

Thus in 1914 Europe was very unevenly divided between 21 apparently free constitutional states¹ which covered, taken together, an area of only 3.237.521 squ. kilometres, with 199.351.000 inhabitants, while the three partitioning empires had grown to a compact territory of 23.577.568 square kilometres, with 292.716.000 inhabitants, all under autocratic rule, despite the external forms

1. France, Great Britain, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Belgium, Holland, Switzerland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Rumania, Bulgaria, Greece, Serbia, Montenegro, Luxembourg, Monaco, San Marino, Liechtenstein, Andorra.

of British parliamentarism. This disproportion between the free states and autocratic dynastic empires was one of the results of the partition of Poland and could never have become possible, had Poland survived the French Revolution.

While the three oriental empires remained in close alliance for over a century — the free states were divided : England joined the oriental empires in order to beat Napoleon and humiliate France ; Italy, though helped by France in her struggle for independence, joined the alliance of the German empires directed against the freedom of Europe.

A world-war was needed to rectify such entanglements. At last we see the three leading nations of western civilisation, England, France and Italy, keeping together as one, and it is to be hoped they will be as permanently united as once were Poland, Lithuania and Ruthenia against the oriental despotism of their western and eastern neighbours.

But a new danger to the political freedom of Europe has arisen by the apparent conversion to western ideals of that empire which had annexed the greater part of Poland. Most people in England and France believed this would shorten the war, but in truth quite the contrary has happened. If free states alone were united against German despotism, few would remain neutral and the Western Powers would certainly proclaim the independence of Poland as one of the chief aims of the war. If they have not dared to do this, it is because their eastern ally has not given up the German dream of *Weltherrschaft*, cherished by the ancestors of the Tsar, and wishes to keep his share of

Poland and even to increase it. France and England agree to this, thus showing to what extent the Prussian spirit, responsible for the partition of Poland, has permeated that western civilisation which brought about the French Revolution.

The governments have no faith in the life of free nations. They treat these as subjects of German-made dynasties, while Poland was the first great European state which emancipated itself from dynastic power and brought the same democratic freedom to the Lithuanians and Ruthenians. Now the western allies ignore these facts and maintain that Podolia, Volhynia, Ukraine, White Russia and Lithuania are Muscovite dominions for ever, because with Prussian help they were wrested from Poland by a German Empress of Russia.

They find it natural that the tsar should rule over Poland, which never tolerated the despotism of its own kings. France keeps chiefly in Algeria or Morocco most of the Poles who joined the *légion étrangère* with the purpose of beating the Germans. All efforts of four millions Poles in the United States to form a Polish army have been thwarted by direct or indirect Muscovite influence. Eastern Galicia, which has belonged to Poland since the XI century is treated by Bobrinsky as a reconquered Muscovite province to be russified, though it never belonged to Muscovy.

The promises of the Grand Duke were thus broken almost immediately after they were given¹, and still his

1. This often happened before in the relations between the Poles and Muscovy. Alexander I solemnly promised a constitution to Poland, and granted it only to a small part of the old Republic, calling this part kingdom of Poland. He sent to Warsaw his brother, under whom the constitution was constantly broken, until this lawlessness led to the revolution of 1830.

bold announcement that the tsar would rule over Poland is considered by the French Press as very generous. The censorship forbids the partisans of independence to write openly on the Polish question and allows the repetition of old calumnies even in apparently scientific works such as those of Holland Rose and Alison Phillips¹.

All this awakes the distrust of small nations, uneasy at Russia's growing power and influence over the western allies. This explains the late intervention of Rumania, the wrong intervention of Bulgaria and the non intervention of Greece, also the suspicious attitude of Sweden.

Such things would not have happened had the three oriental dynasties, responsible for the partition of Poland, remained faithful to each other and sincerely defied western civilisation in the name of German despotism. Then most countries now neutral, would have been early drawn into the contest and no suspicion could have arisen that the

1. Holland Rose (*Nationality as a factor in modern history*, London, Rivington 1916) considers the Muscovites as the chief Slavs and treats the Poles as merely a discordant note in the awakening of Russia. He ignores the long and glorious political past of the Poles and their contributions to the history of national liberty in Europe; while he admits (p. 100) that the Russians have "attained only to a racial feeling, but not to the wider feeling which may be termed national", he seems to consider the Poles as a kind of Russians, merely because a great part of Poland belongs to Russia. Professor W. Alison Phillips (Poland, London, Williams and Norgate, 1915) calls wrongly the Poles "a conquering race which never amalgamated with the conquering peoples to form a united nation" (p. 42). He says that "the serfs were emancipated not by the Poles but by the Russians, and not for Polish but for Russian ends" (p. 45), which is contrary to historical fact and betrays an incredible ignorance of Polish history. He affirms that the Polish State was "informed by the spirit of conquest and domination" (p. 57) and that the Muscovites had brought historical proof enough to persuade the doubtful that Lithuania and White Russia belonged of right to Russia (p. 130). Rarely does so small a book by an expert contain so many falsehoods on the subject which that expert pretends to know fully.

war was carried on for the territorial aggrandizement of the greatest continental empire which, having destroyed the liberty of Poland, has wrested Finland from Sweden and Bessarabia from Rumania, and now openly acknowledges its wish to take Constantinople with a great part of Turkey and Persia, including the whole of Armenia.

Such an ally changes the attitude of the western powers towards Poland and of the neutrals towards the western powers. The western powers, instead of prevailing over the eastern policy of conquest and denationalisation, have accepted this policy towards Poland in order to please their eastern ally. This protracts the war, spreading mistrust among all the neutrals, a mistrust justified by the fate of Armenia, Belgium, Serbia and Poland.

The only way out of this difficulty is the complete conversion of Russia to the ideals of western civilisation. Such a conversion would inevitably lead the great Oriental empire to give up all the Polish territories obtained by German intrigue, and to recognise that Poland has the same right to the restitution of what it has lost since 1772, as France to its losses of 1871.

Poland defended Europe against oriental invasion during centuries and up to 1831, when the Polish revolution saved France from a very great danger to its liberty, as French historians admit. It is now time for the western powers to save Poland and to state clearly that Poland's independence is a chief aim of the war.

The alternative between the federation of free nations as started by Poland in the xivth century and the German rule in Europe has been the reason of the secular struggle

of the Poles against the Germans. If Europe does not wish German rule, her only resource is to allow the reconstruction of the old Polish Republic, increased by Silesia and East Prussia, which are inhabited by germanised Slavs and would soon become Polish again under a Polish government.

Some politicians offer to Poland an autonomy within the limits of the territory in which the Polish language is spoken, forgetting that neither France nor Italy nor Spain are ethnographically homogenous. Even in so small a province as Alsace-Lorraine, no less than five living languages¹ are spoken by the people without impairing political unity.

In Poland only three languages were spoken : Polish, Lithuanian and Ruthenian in its various dialects, all much more akin to Polish than to the Russian language of the Muscovites. No national state of Europe stands the test of linguistic unity : everywhere we see languages other than the national language spoken, sometimes totally different from the official language of the State, as are the Bask and Breton languages in France and Welsh in Great Britain.

Ethnography is only one element of national life and everywhere in Europe different ethnographic elements have been fused into a higher national unity. Ethnographic France without Bretagne, Provence, Savoie, Alsace-

1. These languages are : 1. French. 2. German. 3. *Elsässer ditsch*, a German dialect, as different from German as the Dutch language. 4. *Patois lorrain*, a French dialect very different from French. 5. An old Celtic dialect, spoken in the district of Schnirlach or Lapoutroy. Besides, we find in the district of Lixheim a combination of 3 and 4.

Lorraine, could not defend itself against Germany. Ethnographic England without Wales, Ireland, Scotland could not rule over the seas. Ethnographic Italy without Sicily, Venice, Lombardia could never have attained national unity and now it longs for Trieste, although this is surrounded by Slav peasants who nationally belong to Serbia.

For the same reason Poland without Prussia, Silesia, Podolia, Volhynia, Lithuania, Ukraine, White Russia, Kurland, which have been historically united with Poland for centuries, is a political absurdity and Polish autonomy under an autocratic tsar of German origin is a mockery. Such a Poland would necessarily come under German influence and increase the German peril.

There is no need to seek new frontiers for Poland, if we admit that the partition was a great wrong, as two impartial authors have recently demonstrated to English readers in England¹ and America². The wrong must be righted and Poland must obtain at least all she has lost since 1771, with certain additions of territories lost before this date, such as Silesia and East Prussia.

The reconstitution of the real historical Poland leads to very important advantages for Europe. Such a Poland, with an area of 834.288 square kilometres, inhabited in 1914 by over 60 millions inhabitants, could supply nine million soldiers for the defence of European liberty. It would also lead to the true emancipation of other nations which desire political freedom. This political freedom,

1. Lord Eversley, *The partitions of Poland*, London, Fisher Unwin, 1915.

2. Robert Howard Lord, *The Second partition of Poland*, Cambridge; *The Harvard University Press*, 1915.

as it exists in France, England, Spain, Portugal and Italy, has not yet crossed the Rhine, except in Switzerland and Holland. The Poles, Ruthenians, Lithuanians, Letts, Esths, Finns, Bohemians can guarantee mutually their freedom only by forming a federation to defend their liberty against the empires which partitioned the Polish Republic.

These nations deserve liberty no less than the Greeks, Serbs and Rumanians. Such a belt of free nations around Germany is the only mortal blow to Prussian militarism and pangermanism. It would convert even the Germans into good Europeans, having a share in the Greco-Roman tradition of law and liberty, against which they arose in 1914, as their ancestors have arisen many times for the last fifteen centuries.

The present war is the final reaction of the original populations of the Roman Empire against the German invasions and can only be successfully terminated by the decisive conversion of those barbarians to the western ideals of international law and mutual respect among civilised nations, inherited from Greece and Rome, and defended against oriental invasions by Poland.

Only when the enemy is convinced that he is wrong, can we consider our victory as definitive. Then the constitutional liberty of the western powers would not only cross the Rhine, but extend at once to the basin of the Dniepr and Duna, and perhaps even beyond, into the Muscovite empire.

This empire would suffer a moderate loss of territory of about one twentieth of its present area. Such a loss could amply be compensated by probable acquisitions from

Turkey. But even without such compensation, the Muscovite empire would still remain five times larger than all the free states of Europe put together. It would also gain the esteem and confidence of its neighbours if it gave up voluntarily the provinces taken from Sweden, Poland and Rumania.

The confidence of Europe will be much needed by Russia after the war, first in order to pay her enormous debts and then in order to develop the resources of her empire, which will not escape domestic struggles similar to those of western Europe, since it has given up the alliance with German despotism.

The existence of a dozen free nations between Germany and Russia leads to her full emancipation from German influence. This influence has been growing constantly since Peter I, penetrating invisibly the administration, the army and the whole social life of Russia, until it manifested itself to the eyes of the world in a most humiliating manner in 1915, when everything was ready for a great diplomatic success of the German empires, and Russia had to pay so dearly for her perseverance in the western alliance.

A free Poland means also an increased hope of freedom for Russia. Never can Russia be free, so long as it has under its harsh rule nations on a much higher level of civilisation than the Muscovites. The oppression of these nations breeds legions of functionaries who maintain a system of arbitrary rule and are afraid of every manifestation of liberty. Even such apparent liberals as Trubetskoj, Milyoukov, Berdiajew are in favour of keeping the conquests of

the reactionary government against which they protest. They cannot understand that no nation which oppresses other nations can be free.

Thus an independent Poland as a great historical power within its ancient frontiers is needed not only as a guarantee of European freedom, but it would soon become the benefactor of its worst enemies, of Germany and Muscovy.

Until this truth is thoroughly understood, there is no hope for a lasting peace. This certainly justifies every publication about Poland which shows the Polish nation in its true light, as a civilising power, much more akin to the Romans and to the British than to its present rulers.

October 10, 1916.

Barby near Bonneville (Haute-Savoie).

W. LUTOSŁAWSKI.

THE POLISH NATION

It is almost unknown outside of Poland that the peculiar and apparently unique position of the United States of America among the nations of mankind is only a development of a similarly peculiar and really unique position held by Poland for centuries before the American war for Independence.

Of America all the oppressed of other countries dream as of a safe refuge of liberty, and when they can no longer endure the iniquities of their governments, they seek America, trusting to find there perfect freedom, not only for their thoughts but also for their words and actions. But at a time when America was unknown, it was Poland, as the only great republican commonwealth of Europe, which received all refugees, alike from the Eastern States of Tartary and Muscovy, as also from the German principalities, governed by tyrannic and ambitious princes, and even from Italy, France, and England. The English Unitarians published many books in Poland, at Rakow, which became famous among them, when their liberty of free expression of thought was curtailed by the Trinitarians of all other countries. The Jews, before they discovered America as their promised land, concentrated mainly in Poland, which became their chief home for many centuries, while they were persecuted everywhere else. The Armenians oppressed by the Turks came in large numbers to Poland where they have preserved even now a separate ecclesiastical hierarchy with an archbishop in Lwów. The Hussites, when

they were threatened with extermination in Bohemia, found liberty in Poland.

Although now-a-days republicans of all countries look to the United States as the largest and most successful experiment in republican government, yet for centuries Poland was the successful example of the greatest republic known throughout the Christian world. If now in America we find more separate nationalities than anywhere else, in past centuries Poland could boast of establishing personal and social links or political relations among twenty two nationalities living around or within the great Republic. And this refers not to accidental or passing relations, but to permanent contact, lasting for centuries, between the Poles and these many nations. If now America is the great cauldron of nationalities from which a new nation is being evolved, Poland made use of all the contrasts between the Poles and twenty two other nationalities to assert and intensify the national character of the oldest settlers of the country and of the lords of the soil. If America is now the field for all kinds of daring social enterprise, for communities of different types and aims, so was Poland in the time of its independence, containing many peculiar states and products of self-government within one free commonwealth. If America is now famous for its democratic spirit and enlargement of franchise, so was Poland, in granting the right of citizenship to an extent never known before or elsewhere.

The more one studies the history of Poland and the present conditions of the United States, the more it becomes evident that the United States is carrying out on a wider scale, and so far with greater success, an experiment started in Poland. That strange experiment began in Poland in the fourteenth century by the election of Prince Jagiello of Lithuania as a life-long President or King of the Polish-Lithuanian-Ruthenian United States of Central Europe, called the Polish Republic. That experiment consists in the participation of increasing numbers of citizens in the political affairs of the State, and in the increa-

sing limitation of the power and authority of the officials of the State. Once this identity of principle is recognized, the Americans must look upon the Poles, as well as upon the ancient citizens of democratic Attica, as being their political predecessors, and they will ask themselves : What lessons can be learned from the notorious failure of Attica and Poland ? Will Warsaw be free again as Athens is now ? What are the means of preventing a similar, and by no means impossible, failure for America in this great attempt, to increase the freedom of individuals and to reduce to the utmost the power of the State, without losing its unity and independence ?

It is easy to study Attica and its old democracy, based, as was the American democracy before 1860, upon the slavery of the great majority of inhabitants. Whoever undertakes the comparison of democratic and aristocratic governments will find many useful lessons in the struggle between Athens and Sparta. But when we then advance in our historical review of the past towards more recent times and desire to know the truth about the greatest mediaeval democratic commonwealth, the Polish Republic, it is much more difficult to ascertain, though the number of witnesses and documents increases considerably. This difficulty is little known, for falsehoods about Poland have been widely circulated everywhere, and often without the slightest contradiction, so that they bear the semblance of truth. There is certainly no other country, nor any other nation, so much slandered ; and there are very clear motives, which explain this inevitable falsification of history, which has gone on for the last two hundred years.

Never before in the history of mankind had a powerful and large state been suddenly partitioned among three neighbours. Frequently one nation has been conquered by another, but never before had the conqueror differed so radically from the conquered as the dynastic, bureaucratic Prussian, Austrian, or Muscovite differed from the democratic and republican Pole.

Thus for three great centralised, dynastic, bureaucratic governments, it became an imperious necessity to conceal the truth about their victim in order to justify their aggression, and to misrepresent their lawlessness as the rule of law and justice, and Polish liberty as anarchy and disorder. They used every available means for that purpose. They found even good scholars, famous for their learning and trustworthiness in their studies on other subjects, who either for honours or for money, or to avoid persecution, or because they were blinded by the apparent greatness of their employers, used all the apparatus of scholarship and historical research to misrepresent the past and present of Poland.

From the works of German professors these falsehoods have penetrated into seemingly impartial French and English essays or encyclopaedias, so that I could count on a single page of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* not less than forty mistakes of fact in the article on the great Pole Mickiewicz. This is quite natural, the article being written by Professor Morfill, an admirer of Muscovite greatness. Even writers apparently independent, as for instance Voltaire, were won over to the cause of the oppressors against the victim. The chief French chair of Slavic literature in Paris, founded for Mickiewicz, is now held by Louis Leger, who also is prejudiced against Poland.

Superficial minds judge historical events according to immediate success, and are therefore apt to admire the rapid mushroom growth of Brandenburg and Muscovy, or as they are now called, Prussia and Russia. Even these names are deceptive. Three hundred years ago there was no Prussia, nor Russia, outside of Poland. Prussia had been a north-western province of Poland since 1466, and Russia a south-eastern province since 1386. Our next western neighbours were the princes of Brandenburg, and one of them, being a nephew of the Polish King, was entrusted in 1525 with the administration of Prussia, on condition that all his successors should forever remain vassals of the Polish Republic. When in 1656 the Poles were

at war with the Swedes, the prince of Prussia did not keep his pledge and betrayed the Polish King joining the enemy in the battle of Warsaw. Thus by felony he gained from Poland his independence, confirmed at the peace of Oliva in 1660, after he had betrayed the Swedes in the same war, as soon as the Poles began to prevail. His successor, desiring the title of a king, used the name of a Polish province, recently wrested from Poland, more by intrigue and duplicity than by force of arms. He called himself King of Prussia, extending the name of Prussia over his German territory, so that now the true meaning of this name is nearly forgotten and all Northern Germans are called by the non-German name of Prussians.

A very similar thing happened in the east of Poland. We had there as our neighbours and hereditary foes the Tsars of Muscovy, vassals of the Khans of Tartary. When the Tsars had emancipated themselves from the Khans, and the power over Muscovy came into the hands of Peter, called the Great, who had the advantage of a western education, he was ashamed to use the discredited and servile name of Muscovy and sought in Poland a title untarnished by the bloodthirsty cruelty of Iwan the Terrible. He made use of the name of a province, part of which had been conquered from Poland, Russia, and extended that name over his Muscovite dominions, so that now all Muscovites are called Russian.

This misnomer is far worse than the Prussian one, as the northern Germans or germanized Slavs of Brandenburg were at least of Aryan race, like the Prussians, whose name they usurped; but the Muscovites, who were Turanians, of the same race as the Finns, Hungarians, Bulgarians, Turks, and Tartars, now pretend to be Aryans, and even to belong to the oldest Aryans, called Slavs, merely because they use an Aryan name, and have accepted a Slavic language, displaying thereby an un-Aryan neglect of tradition. They conceal and deny their Turanian past, their tradition of slavery, tyranny and cruelty; and, with the name of Russians, obtained by false pretences,

and thanks to their adoption of a Slavic language, they assume a leading place among the Slavs, imparting to many smaller Slavic nations the illusion of consanguinity.

The Prussians and Russians, having been at all points opposed to the Poles and in many respects similar to one another, had a natural tendency to join their frontiers over a subjugated Poland, and after perpetrating the crime of partitioning Poland, attempted by every means to deceive all the Aryan nations as to the real motives and consequences of their action. They are now constantly inventing fresh calumnies; and they find many Poles who believe them, for they teach a falsified history in their schools, attendance in which has become obligatory for Polish children; they maintain a large venal press, actively engaged in clever distortions of historical truth; they publish false official statistics; they hire the services of sophists in the guise of university professors at home or abroad, or in the guise of diplomatic agents of their own or other countries; or by flattery they win over some vain and gifted publicist like William Stead. They mingle truth with falsehood as skilfully as cotton is mixed with wool in shoddy materials to give every appearance of wool to the mixture. This has been done generation after generation, and unanimously, by the three centralised and bureaucratic governments of Prussia, Russia and Austria. Falsehoods obstinately repeated during centuries and not denied by the victims, even partly believed by some of them, because of the great difficulty of getting at the truth—such falsehoods become invested with all the authority of well-established historical truths.

The victims have little leisure for historical research. They are forbidden the use of books, from which they might learn the truth; they are reduced by spoliation to poverty or economic slavery; they employ most of their strength in actual struggles, and have no leisure to discuss history. Libraries are burnt, or carried away to St. Petersburg; documents are stolen or falsified; churches are transformed into Protestant temples or Greek orthodox tserkoffs; ancient names of places

are changed and forbidden even in local use ; thousands of children are torn from their parents to be perversely educated as the most efficient persecutors of their own race and nation ; even the use of the language is forbidden in public gatherings and becomes restricted to the unsafe privacy of a constantly disturbed family life.

Never before or since have such varied means been used to conceal and transform the historical truth about a nation—because so sudden and almost unexpected a partition of one of the largest states of Europe has never happened. Poland was larger and more populous than any single one of the partitioning powers, but she could not resist three simultaneous attacks in time of peace, when no war had been prepared or expected. From three sides, the small numbers of those who still dared to resist were surrounded by an enemy closing in upon them. The King of Prussia used for this purpose over a million pounds given to him by England as a subsidy to be employed against the French revolution. Thus he performed a double betrayal, faithful only to the traditions of the house of Hohenzollern.

Besides the strong interests of Prussia, Russia and Austria, and the unscrupulous means by which the partitioning powers served their ends, there are still further reasons for the exceptional difficulty in learning the truth about Poland and the Polish nation.

Poland is in the centre of Europe : if you find on a map the old city of Kraków (Cracow), which has been, and still remains, the chief centre of Poland's intellectual and artistic life, you will find that it is about equidistant from Perm in the north-east and Seville in the south-west, from Bergen in the north and Syracuse or Athens in the south, from Queenstown in the north-west and Astrachan in the south-east or Archangel in the north-east, — to take only the chief points which determine the political outline of Europe. This central position of Poland has been obscured in the minds of the historians by the circumstance that they have

heretofore devoted much more attention to the Germanic and Romanic nations than to the Slavs and Turanians, whose historical career among the nations of Europe began later. As long as we take into consideration only Germany, France, England, Spain, and Italy, of course Paris or Geneva, and not Cracow, will be the natural centre of Europe; and even to such a Europe the Poles would still belong by their character, tradition and religion. But since certain Turanians, like the Hungarians, the Bulgarians and the Finns, have penetrated among the Aryan nations, and the Turanian Muscovites have accepted a Slavic language and conquered many Slavic and Lithuanian peoples, our conception of Europe must be extended to its geographical limits, the Caspian Sea and the Ural Mountains. And in such a Europe Poland will be the centre, not only geographically, but also ethnographically.

If we go north of Poland, we meet with four different nationalities : Lithuanians, Finns, Swedes, Lapps. Likewise, south of Poland, we find four chief nationalities : Hungarians, Roumanians, Bulgarians, and Greeks, without counting the Turks, who do not belong to Europe. East of Poland we have the Ruthenians, Muscovites, Tartars, Czeremis; while west of Poland we have either the Germans, Frenchmen, Spaniards, and Portuguese in a southwestern direction, or the Germans, Dutch, English and Irish in a northwestern direction. Whenever we go from Poland towards the border of Europe, we meet from three to five chief nationalities. Poland in its narrowest sense is the country between the western Carpathian Mountains and the Baltic Sea, chiefly the basin of the rivers Oder, Vistula, Niemen and Warta, with Kraków (Cracow), Warszawa (Warsaw), Poznań (Posen), Gdańsk (Danzig) as its chief towns. This country has been inhabited by one and the same nation from immemorial times, and there is no historical tradition of the Poles coming from elsewhere, or having been conquered or assimilated by a foreign nation.

While every other part of Europe has been invaded and conquered by foreigners, the Poles have kept the country of

their origin, materially less favoured by natural resources than many other countries, but very suitable for agriculture. For it is neither so flat as the eastern plain of Russia, nor so mountainous as western Europe, and is irrigated by many small rivers, that slowly descend towards the Baltic Sea, and are very rarely threatened with inundations from which they are protected by large forests.

This central and intermediate position of Poland had great drawbacks, besides obvious advantages. For centuries the Poles had to deal with no fewer than nineteen different neighbours. Only four of these neighbours were Slavs: the Czechs or Bohemians in the west, the Slovaks in the south, Ruthenians in the south-east and the White Russians in the north-east. Thus the Poles were not only in the centre of Europe, but also in the centre of the Slavic population within which the Polish State had grown. Three of the neighbours were of the Letto-Lithuanian branch of Aryans, and occupied the country north of the Poles: the Prussians, Lithuanians, and Letts. They are more closely related to the Slavs than other Aryans, but do not belong to the Slavic branch; and in prehistoric times they separated themselves from the common Slavo-Lettic stock before the differentiation of the Slavs had begun. Besides these seven, they had four other Aryan neighbours: the Germans, the Danes, the Swedes and the Roumanians. A twelfth Aryan nation, whose home is distant from Poland, immigrated in great numbers into our country: the Armenians. They may therefore be considered also as neighbours of Poland. Besides these twelve Aryan nations, the Poles had constantly to deal with, and often to fight, with five Turanian nations: the Esths, the Muscovites, the Tartars, the Turks and the Hungarians. And also as neighbours without a home, we must consider the Gypsies and the Jews, who came to Poland in great numbers, seeking a safe refuge from the persecution they suffered in other countries. Besides all these, Scotch, Italians, and Greeks were also found in great numbers in Poland in the pursuit of their various trades, so

that no less than twenty two different kinds of people were familiar to the Poles.

These relations of the Poles with twenty two different nations further increased the difficulty of learning the truth about Poland. As usual in primitive conditions, most of the neighbourly relations were not friendly and many misunderstandings, calumnies, and quarrels arose. These produced a vast fund of error about Poland, which has permeated the general information available for the more distant civilized French and English nations.

No small or great nation of Europe since the fall of the Roman Empire has had to deal and to struggle with so many different peoples of different race and origin ; and in that respect alone the United States of America have beaten every previous record, as they count among their citizens not only most of the twenty two nations known in Poland, but also great numbers of other races : aborigines of America, Africa, Eastern Asia and Western Europe. As a centre of conflicting ethnographic tendencies, Poland was the greatest experiment in humanity before the United States started on its singular career ; and all the difficulties of judging the contemporary American exist in a similar way when we undertake to judge the Poles. Apart from the wilful misrepresentation of history by three powerful states, there are to be taken into account the involuntary mistakes of twenty two nationalities surrounding or penetrating into Poland.

Then there is a very great difference of opinion among the Poles themselves, due to their natural restlessness and their constant resistance for a thousand years to so many invasions, and to their passionate character, recognizing no authority, always inclined to doubt and to discuss everything. It would be difficult to find in the literature of other nations, except perhaps in that of modern England, so many passionate accusations of one's own people as we have been accustomed to hear among the Poles for centuries. This is a result of their lofty ideal of perfection, to which no actual experience cor-

responds, in their strife to improve existing conditions. They have been and remain the most progressive nation in Europe, comparable in the whole world in that respect to the Americans only. Their peculiar Polish failing was disregard for the past, so frequently found also in America.

For the last hundred years we have had an additional difficulty in learning the truth about Poland, due to the secrecy of national life under oppression. The real leaders of the nation remain in the shade, to avoid too frequent imprisonment. Many witnesses of the most important political events die in exile or in prison, or have not the leisure to put their reminiscences into writing, or if they have done so, these manuscripts are destroyed by the agents of persecution. Many skirmishes in our last revolution are likely to remain unknown, as all the combatants have been killed.

The great material prosperity of our enemies impresses even the most impartial witnesses, as for instance the late United States Ambassador to Berlin and St. Petersburg, Andrew D. White, who disbelieved in the possibility of Poland's independence. Such men judge according to visible results and admire the material power of Russia and Prussia, believing there must be a corresponding moral power behind them. The Turanian origin of the Muscovites is totally forgotten and they are considered as the chief Slavic nation, though every step of their diplomacy and politics betrays their un-Aryan origin.

The Prussians again are considered as the foremost Germans and organizers of the new German Empire, though their name announces their foreign origin and reminds us that most of them are simply the weaker elements from among the Slavs, living once between the rivers Elbe and Oder, the descendants of those who betrayed their country and their language and underwent therefore a superficial germanization. All the nobler and better elements of these same Western Slavs, when they saw their country hopelessly desecrated by its enemies, went east and became Poles. Modern

Prussians, as renegades, or descendants from renegades, are thus the most fanatic persecutors of their own kin, sharing the usual shame of renegades, who hate most the cause which they have betrayed. How superficial the germanization of the Prussians is, can be seen in the thousands who are easily and voluntarily polonized again if they settle in Poland. Neither the Prussians are Germans, nor the Muscovites Russians ; and their military victories are not yet a definitive measure of their real power.

They have succeeded in implanting in the minds of European readers many calumnies against their victim, Poland ; and these calumnies are sufficient to conceal the real importance of the Polish nation and the necessity of its independence for the welfare of mankind. As an example of these calumnies may be quoted the constantly recurring statement that Poland was in a state of anarchy and that it was for the sake of introducing order and justice that the partitions became necessary. This, as we shall see in a detailed account of the partitions, is an absolute untruth ; for nowhere in Europe was life and property safer than in Poland at the time of the second partition, and it is since the partitions that order and justice have disappeared from the country inhabited by the Poles.

A second and even more impudent calumny is the common assertion that the Poles were an aristocratic nation and oppressed the peasants. Quite the reverse is the fact : nowhere have the people enjoyed so many rights and liberties as in Poland ; no nation of Europe has extended the franchise and full rights of citizenship to such great numbers of its members as have the Poles. As early as the eighteenth century the number of full citizens in Poland was about fourteen *per cent* of the inhabitants while in England half a century later the electors formed less than two *per cent* of the population and had far fewer liberties and rights than the Polish citizens called *szlachta*¹. Just before the second partition, the Poles had decided by their constitution

1. Pronounced like the German *Schlacht*, meaning battle.

of the 3rd of May, 1791, that each diet should grant the full rights of citizenship to a certain number of inhabitants, until all were equals. Poland, like every other country of Europe, had not reached universal suffrage; but while in all other countries the rights of citizenship depended on income or taxation, usually on economic conditions, in Poland alone the very poorest citizens became nobles, if they had done individually or collectively something for their nation. To call Poland an aristocratic country is like calling Spain a heretic country because so many heretics have been burned in Spain. The Spanish Inquisition was due not to the number of heretics, but to the religious fanaticism and cruelty of the believers. The great number of nobles in Poland is not due to aristocratic prejudice, but simply to the endeavour to make all men as equal as possible. It was forbidden under the penalty of infamy to accept or to use titles in Poland, and we owe the many Polish counts, whom you may now find everywhere, to Prussian kings and to Austrian emperors, who gave these titles to the most servile of their adherents, to the worst specimens of Poles, in order to attach them to the cause of spoliation and oppression.

But even those who know Poland best cannot easily tell all they know — first, because they cannot betray the secrets of national organization; and second, because the peculiarities of Polish character and life make it impossible to express them in any language other than Polish.

However, there is one way of studying and admiring the Polish genius, and this is through Polish art. The music of Chopin, which differs so much from other music, is Polish, emphatically Polish, as is likewise the less known music of Moniuszko, and the musical expression of Paderewski, even if he plays German compositions. He who knows anything of music will find that this Polish spirit, as revealed in Polish composers, is singularly variable and intensely emotional. The singing of Reszke and Sembrich-Kochańska, the acting of Helena Modjeska, were also Polish, and have manifested the same exquisite impressionability and emotion that characterised

Chopin. The pictures of Matejko, Chełmoński, Grottger, Tetmajer, Stachiewicz, Siemiradzki, Malczewski, Kossak, Wyspiański, are open to the view of all lovers of art, as are the sculptures of Godebski, or Laszczka; and they give more information about Polish life and Polish national spirit than any English spoken words could tell. Also the truly Polish lecturer will appear peculiar in the intensity of his sympathy with an audience, and those who listen to him will be able to feel the difference which separates him from the lecturers of other nations.

In all such inferences from art as to the national spirit, you must beware of premature generalization. A name ending in "ski", even if it were the name of one of the Polish Kings, like Sobieski, Leszczyński, and Poniatowski, may belong to a man of thoroughly un-Polish race and un-Polish spirit; while sometimes a foreign name belongs to a true Pole, as in the case of Chopin, Grottger, Linde, Estreicher, Curie, and many others. Before you accept an artist as an exponent of Polish national spirit, inquire about him from some reliable friend, who is familiar with Poland. As the works of art in music, painting, or architecture are accessible to all and need no translation, they are the safest means of forming an opinion as to the Polish national character. But Polish poetry, which of all art in Poland has flourished most and is most characteristic, remains beyond the reach of foreigners. Its works are as difficult to translate as, for other reasons, those of Walt Whitman, Kipling or Browning. They are peculiar to the race, and to the nation which is the ripest branch of this race.

As to books in English on Poland, very few can be recommended. One of the best was written about 1830 by Moltke, who later became the famous field-marshal, and this work is well translated into English¹. It is an impor-

1. Poland, An Historical Sketch, by Field-marshal Count von Moltke, authorized translation, with a biographical notice by Emma S. Buchheim, London, Chapman and Hall, 1885.

tant testimony in our favour by an enemy of our nation and an advocate of our partitioning. We cannot imagine a more interesting account of Poland by a hostile witness, and certain passages from Moltke's book deserve to be quoted here. Nobody has given a more vivid picture of the Polish constitution. Moltke, as a true Prussian, despised this constitution, and this gives greater weight to his involuntary concessions which will strike the impartial reader as extraordinary : " Poland was a republic, made up of about three hundred thousand petty suzerainties, each of which was immediately connected with the State and was subject to the whole body alone, acknowledging no kind of feudal superiority or of feudal dependence. No Polish noble was the vassal of a superior lord — the meanest of them appeared at the diet in the full enjoyment of that power, which belonged to all without distinction. It is here that we find the fundamental difference between the Polish constitution and the feudal states of the West and the despotism of the East " (p. 3). — " The mutual relations of the nobles were based upon perfect equality among all, and as much independence for the individual as was compatible therewith. Starting from the principle, that a free man cannot be taxed or governed contrary to his own declared will, the unanimous consent of all was required for resolutions dealing with these matters, in other words, for all laws ; the dissent of a few or a single individual sufficed for the rejection of a measure " (p. 4). — " It was owing to this spirit of independence that the chief, who latterly bore the inappropriate title of King, was invested with the highest dignity, but by no means with the highest power. The dignity of the crown brought him no privileges beyond the rights to appoint the state officials, to distribute the state domains and to administer justice. The election of the King depended upon the will of the assembled nobles. Whenever it happened that distinguished families were able for a time to make the crown hereditary among their members, the nation never failed, on the extinction of the race, to reassert its rights of election " (p. 6).

This shows clearly the republican character of Poland even in the oldest times, when the nobles usually accepted as kings either a son or relative of the last king. On the influence of religion on the Poles, Moltke says : " The King received the Primate (Archbishop of Gnesen) standing, and the latter had the right of remonstrating with him on his government, and of repeating his accusations in the senate or diet, if the King persisted in his course " (p. 9).

The democratic character of the Polish Republic is shown by Moltke quite as clearly as the early republicanism of the Poles : " The general tendency of the constitution shows that the great offices and dignitaries of the state were elective like the throne, and the repeated efforts to make them hereditary were rendered futile by the jealousy of the entire body " (p. 9). — " Although it seems difficult, nay almost impossible, under these circumstances, for a king to form a party in the state which should endanger the privileges of individuals, the nation thought it necessary to provide against a possible abuse of power, and employed a method unknown in the annals of any other nation. This was the confederation " (p. 11). — " Contrary to the theory of other nations, who look on revolution as the greatest misfortune in the state, revolution was legally organized in Poland. If any question of interest received sufficient support in the republic, but could not be carried because of the opposition of the existing government or the veto of individuals, those concerned formed a confederation, bound themselves by solemn oaths, appointed a leader and took up arms, in order to battle for their opinions. The strength of the confederations constituted their right; whatever the result of their undertaking, none of the confederates could be punished or looked upon as rebels. The decisions of the majority were recognized in these confederations, which were in reality nothing else than the forcible carrying out of the will of the nation. To prevent this violent remedy for tyranny from becoming a tyrant in its turn, the time of duration of these confederations was settled beforehand and all their resolu-

tions became void at their dissolution. What was settled unanimously remained law, and every confederation ended with the summoning of a diet" (p. 15). — "Although king and senate exercised the highest power in the State, the real sovereignty rested in the united body of the nobles, who in spite of both could legally carry out their will; if unanimous, at the diet; if not, by means of a confederation" (p. 15). — "The king was bound to summon the diet every two years. If he neglected to call one, the nation had the right to do so" (p. 16). — "The affairs of individuals were settled by a majority and in a summary way. Lawyers were unknown. Those concerned stated their case themselves and the decision followed without delay and expense. It is characteristic that the same men deliberated in the senate, made laws in the diet, administered justice in the tribunals and wielded the sword in battle" (p. 16). — "Poland is the only European state which down to the XVIth century possessed no military force, except that of its armed and mounted nobles" (p. 17). — "An admirable peculiarity of this warlike nobility was the simplicity of their habits. They lived the greater part of the year on their estates; there they spent their income, practised an extensive hospitality, and remained at a distance from and independent of the court. The wealth, which the noble obtained from his subjects, returned to them again. A few benches, tables and carpets formed the furniture of the richest palatine. The women did not care for luxury. . . . Good armour and excellent horses formed the sole splendour of the men" (p. 19). — "The ancient Poles were very tolerant. They took no part in the religious wars, which devastated Europe in the XVIth and XVIIth centuries. Calvinists, Lutherans, Greeks, Schismatics, Mohammedans long lived peacefully in their midst, and Poland for a time was justly called the "promised land" of the Jews. The Poles actually forced their kings to swear that they would tolerate all sects" (p. 20). — "Still the Poles were very strict in observing the outward ceremonials of the Church. Christianity always seemed too mild to them. They imposed harder

privations on themselves. . . " (p. 20). — "The intercourse of the nobles was cordial and liberal, and no excessive deference was shown to the rich and powerful. Owing to the few requirements, poverty was not allied to dependence in those days. " (In Poland! Everywhere else wealth gave power.) "The dealings of the nobles with each other bore the stamp of their original equality. Their form of address, which still survives, was *Brother*. (This remains even now, eighty five years after Moltke's work was written.) The rapid development of other states and their increasing subordination to the will of their rulers, allowed them to act with growing unity. The admirable qualities of Poland's citizens enabled it, however, to maintain its place in their midst, and to attain to a high degree of power and influence, in spite of the primitive simplicity of its laws, the unlimited respect paid to the privileges of the individual, and the necessarily slow development of the state " (p. 22). — "We may add that the Poland of the XVth century was one of the most civilized states of Europe. It is true that the virtues of the citizens had much to atone for in the badly organized constitution of the republic, so that moral qualities had to supply the place of good laws " (p. 22).

This testimony of a Prussian field-marshal to the virtues of the Poles ought to draw the attention of the whole world to Polish history. Of course, as a Prussian, he had to call the laws of Poland bad laws, so thoroughly opposed are they to the centralised constitution of his own state. For Moltke the ideal is a strong state, not a free nation. But this makes his testimony as to Poland so much the more valuable. The chief features which attracted his notice will deserve the attention of every foreigner, and could not be expressed more shortly or better than in the very words of the Prussian destroyer of France. If this honest barbarian admits that, from his point of view, only the exceptional virtues of the Poles could keep together a state with such simple ("bad", as he calls them) laws, the English reader will believe this surprising testimony of Moltke more readily than any assertion of a Pole about his own

country. Count von Moltke testifies further : " A superior and inferior nobility was never recognized in Poland. The title of count, borne by Poles of to day, would have been despised by their ancestors. Influence, honour, and wealth did not bring political privileges or rank and the poorest noble did not give up a single claim because of his poverty " (p. 27). — " It was for this reason that distinction of class, the arbitrary treatment of the inferior by his superior, did not develop in Poland as in other countries. In the humble, fawning courtesy of the poor noble, degraded perhaps to the position of servant, we to this day recognize the hidden consciousness of his equality, and in the dignified kindness of the great noble, a patriarchal protection extended to the lowest " (p. 28).

This simple, clear and truthful statement refutes all tales about the oppression of peasants in Poland. Not only had the Polish peasants more liberty than elsewhere, but thousands of peasants fled from Muscovy to find protection and liberty in Poland, as is now acknowledged even by Russian historians.

The greatest difference between Prussia and Poland is shown by Moltke in a short but weighty sentence : " An offensive war was contrary to the constitution and rendered almost impossible by the organization of the state. It was illegal for the nobles to be kept under arms for more than three weeks, or for them to be led more than three hours march across the frontier " (p. 34). — " When the example of her neighbours forced Poland to establish a standing army, it was not placed under the immediate control of the king. He appointed a royal field-marshal for Poland and one for Lithuania, but he could not deprive them of office. A definite portion of the revenue was not set aside for the support of the army, but subsidies were voted by each diet " (p. 35). — " Every time that a rupture (a breach of unanimity) occurred in the diet, it was looked upon as a national calamity. The curse of posterity was invoked on that deputy who had occasioned it, and on his family. In order to save themselves from popular fury, these deputies were accustomed to hand in their protest in

writing, and then to wander about, unknown and without rest, cursed by the nation and the object of its aversion " (p. 45). This last is true, and answers the calumnies of those who, pretending there was no possibility of legislation in Poland, count only the diets which have been interrupted by the veto of a deputy. But they forget to recognize that in many diets unanimity was reached, and that unanimity was always considered in Poland as the natural and expected attitude of the delegates, — the protest being considered as an exception and often as a crime.

The fact that there was no such serfdom in Poland as existed in both neighbour states, east and west of Poland, in Germany and Muscovy, is plainly admitted by Moltke : " The peasant did not belong to the lord, he could not be sold. The estate might pass into other hands, but the peasant was not obliged to leave his farm. The fact that he could possess land prevented him from ever becoming a mere serf " (p. 49). — " The peasant was well off, he could raise money on his property and had regular tribunals. He enjoyed the possession of home and land. The Polish peasant enjoyed these privileges at a time when villeinage existed in all the rest of Europe " (p. 51).

About the Jews in Poland Moltke says in conformity with historical truth : " In 1096 they fled to Poland, where at that time there was more religious tolerance than in the rest of Europe " (p. 66). What a magnificent testimony of a Prussian general to the greatness of the Polish nation, if he admits that as early as the XIth century Poland was ahead of the whole of Europe in tolerance ! " The Jews had their own diet, every province sent deputies to Warsaw, where they formed a great assembly and elected their own marshal, whose appointment was confirmed by the government. In short, next to the nobles, the Jews formed the most influential and powerful class in the country " (p. 69).

Moltke admits also that the state of Poland lost its prestige and power chiefly through the election of a German as king (Augustus of Saxony) ; and even under the rule of such a very

despicable king, "there were always men in Poland who were ready to sacrifice themselves for their country" (p. 82).

Count von Moltke, as an aristocrat, mentions with contempt what is really one of the best proofs of Poland's democratic spirit: "The patent of Polish nobility, which was formerly sought by foreign princes (in order to be eligible to the presidency of the Republic), was given away indiscriminately. A Jew who left the faith of his fathers became a Polish noble by baptism" (p. 84).

And compare now what this same impartial and honest witness Moltke says about Russia: "At an early period the independence of the people was lost in serfdom, that of the nobles in the absolute power of the princes. The will of the individual was lost to sight more and more in the will of the State, or rather in that of the head of the State, who united in his person the highest civil and ecclesiastic power, in a manner unknown in any other part of Europe. Hence the unity and strength manifested in the enterprises of the State, and its quick development, for despotism is the best government for barbarians. The Polish annals are thus the histories of great men, the Russian annals the history of a great state. In the former we see the virtues of the individual contending with the faults of the community, in the latter, a line of princes with hereditary power, who force a nation to assume a higher civilization" (p. 95). — "The conquest of Poland was the aim of the rulers of Russia, and this republic, one of the oldest of European states, discovered with terror that it lay between the two newest monarchies of the continent, and that its geographical position was an obstacle to their further development" (p. 91). — "The position of Poland made it a stumbling block to two powerful neighbours, who had in the last centuries made immense progress, and whose rapid development was certain either to bring about their own ruin or to annihilate all obstacles."

This alternative, the ruin of Prussia and Russia or the independence of Poland, because of the incompatibility of Polish

liberty with Prussian and Russian tyranny, Moltke saw clearly already in 1830, and he admitted that "the strong desire of all the Poles to preserve their nationality even amidst the dismemberment of their country, and to see herein the sole and last pledge of their future reunion, brought them into conflict with the natural tendencies of the administration" (p. 144). And Moltke, as a true Prussian and aggressive conqueror of France, proceeds to justify in his own way the partition of Poland, because in his eyes the greatness of a state like Prussia is more important than the individual freedom of all the Poles or the independence of Poland. However, the above quotations from his own work give us a picture of the constitution of Poland that could not easily be improved by additions of our own.

If we discount Moltke's inevitable partiality and his Prussian enthusiasm for the military power of a state, his book remains the very best German book on Poland and leads to conclusions totally different from his own. If such a state of freedom, democracy, republicanism and admittedly high civilization with exceptional civic virtues, existed for centuries in the centre of Europe and was finally conquered by three ambitious, tyrannical, centralised, military neighbours, then this conquest can be considered only as a temporary invasion; and the Polish nation deserves to be free again, when the cause of freedom is triumphant in Europe, whatever may be the fate of the dynasties which sought an increase of their power at the expense of the Polish Republic. This is also the view of the famous Jewish writer, Georg Brandes, in his book on Poland. He says, that "the cause of Poland is the cause of freedom" in Europe. Also an American, Louis E. Van Norman, has published recently a good book on Poland¹, in which he shows the great virtues of the Poles, though he does not foresee their emancipation from the Russian yoke.

Whoever wishes to form an independent opinion of the Polish nation will not succeed without a knowledge of the

1. Poland, the Knight among the Nations. New York. Fleming H. Revell, 1907.

Polish language and without a long residence in all the chief centres of Polish national life : Posen, Cracow, Lemberg, Warsaw, Wilno, Mińsk, Witebsk, Kiev. But certain general truths can be tested by a careful comparative study of foreign books on Poland. The foremost of these truths is that the Polish nation is Aryan in race and language, differing in this from such nations as speak an Aryan language, but are of Turanian race, like the Muscovites or the Bulgarians. Among all the races of mankind it is the privilege of the Aryans to have introduced into human life the rule of law and the respect for the rights of individuals, as opposed to the arbitrary despotism which prevailed among older races. Long after Sanskrit became known in Europe, it was generally supposed that the Aryans came from Asia, but within the last generation the proofs of an European origin of the Aryans have been accumulating, and many scholars now admit as probable that the Aryans were autochthonous in Europe. There is no historical testimony, nor even a mythical tradition, among the Poles of their immigration into Poland from a foreign land, similar to the immigration of the Romans into Gallia, or the Saxons into Britain, or the Germans into Italy.

Whatever the origin of the Aryans, they have shown in all branches of their race a certain intensity of religious and political life, which has generally prevented the possibility of a despotic rule among them for any length of time. The Aryan attitude of mind leads by mutual concessions towards a certain ideal of fairness ; it subordinates present enjoyments to the claims of either a distant future on earth, or of eternity beyond, for which the Aryan race has been working since it began its glorious career. Greek philosophy and art, Roman law and religion, have been the oldest European monuments of this Aryan life. The Poles are of the purest Aryan race, as they form that portion of the Aryans which remained in their original home, while other Aryans, pushing west or south, met there older aborigines of Europe, of which the Basques now seem to form a solitary remnant. All the characteristic peculiarities of the Aryans are therefore found in the Poles.

Nothing has produced so many mistaken views about the Poles as the compliment paid to them by Polish Jews, who everywhere like to call themselves Poles. The Jews, even after many centuries of life in Poland, remain unassimilated, and preserve their Semitic peculiarities, which make them widely different from the Aryan Pole. Even before Christianity, every true Aryan had a clear consciousness of the eternal existence of his soul, while the Semite without hope for the future, lives only this life, making the best of it, according to sense standards. The Polish Jew, even if he has been educated in the Polish language and has taken a Polish name, differs from us more than an old Greek would differ from a contemporary Pole. And the Polish Jew is very fond of calling himself a Pole abroad; he seems to consider it a great honour to disregard his ancestors. Innumerable Polish Jews, to avoid Muscovite persecution, emigrate to America and are classed as Poles, according to their own testimony. The Poles have always granted to the Jews many rights and privileges, accepting them as citizens and even receiving them into the Polish nobility. But the Semitic race has a very persistent character and is totally opposed to the Aryans. The Semites are superior to the Aryans in certain virtues: as, for instance, family feeling and business activity. But they have not the creative genius of the Aryans, nor their intense love of individual liberty, nor the certainty of future life, nor the religious feelings resulting from such certainty. They are vain and ambitious of worldly power and money and do not understand the Aryan devotion to unseen powers. In all these things the Polish Jew is as different from the Pole as was the Phoenician from the Greek, or the Carthaginian from the Roman. And the most common mistake made in the appreciation of Poles is to consider as Poles certain Jews, who boast of being Polish noblemen and speak with ridiculous vanity about their imaginary Polish ancestry. For instance, an authentic Pole of Polish feelings and of Polish race, if he believed himself to be a descendant from one of Poland's elective kings or presidents, would never print it as

an advertisement on the title page of his autobiography, as has been done in America by a man who, boasting of his Polish descent, has spread many falsehoods about Poland. It often requires a good deal of patience and persistence to wring from such a would-be Pole the admission that he had Semitic ancestors. Happily the Semitic type of physiognomy is very persistent, and you can easily recognize a Jew by his face. Let us esteem and admire the Jews as Jews, but do not judge Poles by their Jewish fellow-sufferers. They may mean no harm, and call themselves Poles innocently because they ignore the true meaning of the term; they may be shrewd businessmen or good fathers, but you will not notice in them anything of the heroic tendencies that always characterize an ideal Pole.

The Poles as Aryans have this in common with the other Western Aryans, that they are in many respects the heirs of Rome. Though the Roman conquest never extended as far as Poland, Roman law, religion, civilization, have influenced the Polish nation as deeply as the other nations of western Europe. The influence of Rome on Poland remained a moral and intellectual influence, not a material oppression and assimilation, and Poland was the eastern limit of this Roman influence, which did not permeate the Muscovites. The Russians are heirs of Byzantium; the Poles, like the rest of western Europe, of Rome.

It is a very common mistake in western Europe and America to consider the Poles as a kind of Russians, and to look upon the Russians as being of the same race as the Poles. The difference between Pole and Russian is as great as the difference between Pole and Polish Jew. The Russians, who ought always, as I have already said, to be called Muscovites, are of a Turanian race; and the Turanians differ widely from the Aryans. Some of the Turanian nations, like the Finns and the Hungarians, have entered the family of Aryan nations and accepted many of their uses and laws. But the Muscovites are much more nearly related to the Turks and Tartars than to

European Aryans. They had Russian princes who introduced among them the present Russian language in the XIIth and XIIIth centuries, and it is due to these princes that the whole passive body of the Muscovite Turanians became Russian in language, while remaining thoroughly Turanian in feeling and tradition. Many facts of Russian history show that under the varnish of a Slavic language they have preserved all the primitive savagery of the Turanians. As a French diplomatist said : “ *Grattez le Russe, vous trouverez le Tartare !* ” The Russian government has done everything in its power to represent Russia as an Aryan and Slavic country — it has accepted the doctrine of Pan-slavism, in order to attract all the Slavs under its protection ; but it has invariably shown by its lawlessness and its cruelty that it has never been an Aryan government, and the Russian press, even Russian lecturers abroad, as for instance Milyoukoff, have shown in their attitude towards the Slavs their conformity with the odious government which they combated.

Therefore, if you wish to understand a Pole, be careful to distinguish him from Orientals like the Jews and Russians or Muscovites, and regard him as one of that great western family which gave to mankind the Greeks, the Romans and the English.

Among the Aryans the Slavs may be considered as the most settled and least aggressive of their kind, in marked contrast to their aggressive neighbours, the Germans. For thousands of years there was war between Germans and Slavs, comparable to the wars between the aggressive dynastic Persians and the republican Greeks in antiquity. The Germans have steadily extended their domain from the river Elbe to the Oder and Vistula, forming colonies among the Slavs and germanizing their territory until recent times, when a returning wave begins, and the Slavs are gaining ground on the Germans, chiefly by their greater fecundity. An old German writer, Widukind, said, in the tenth century, that the Germans made war for fame and conquest, the Slavs only to defend their liberty and to avoid

extreme slavery. This old definition holds good even now and the contrast between Germans and Slavs has not been mitigated by thousands of years of mutual relations. In these wars many Germans became Slavs, many Slavs were germanized; the racial difference has been attenuated, but the national types remain opposed and the differentiation is even progressing. It is difficult to define this difference, because it chiefly consists in peculiar, undefinable feelings, best expressed in music, as in the contrast between Wagner and Chopin.

The Slavs have always been and still remain an agricultural population, settled on the land, and strongly attached to it. This explains their love of peace and perhaps accounts also for their exceptionally deep religious feeling, which sometimes reaches the limits of superstition, but which manifests itself in their consciousness of personal immortality and in their faith, even long before they became Christians, in the constant protection of Providence. The mysticism of the Slavs is not peculiar to them, as most other Aryan races have had their mystics, but among the Slavs the intensity and frequency of mystical experiences is exceptional. The Society for Psychical Research would very likely find more materials for its investigations among the Slavs than elsewhere. As further traits of the Slavic character we may mention much natural gaiety, including a great love of dance and song and of society. The Slavs are very sincere, simple and hospitable. And the one thing in which they differ most from their two neighbours, Germans and Muscovites, is their great cult for their women. The influence and independence of women among the Slavs is evident from all their traditions.

Among Slavs the Poles occupied the central position. Poland was probably the original home of the Slavs and there is no evidence whatever that the Poles came from elsewhere. While the eastern and western and southern Slavs have been conquered by other nations and long ago lost their independence, the Poles alone formed an independent state for a thousand years, and have had an opportunity for carrying out

Slavic ideals of political organization, based on brotherhood and freedom. Those who believe that the day of Slavic influence in the world will come, after the other branches of the Aryan race have contributed their share to the life of mankind, must look towards the Poles as the purest Slavs and not expect from the Russians, who are not Slavs nor Aryans, the fulfillment of the Slavic mission. Poland was conquered after the mature formation of its national character, and this national character is even intensified under persecution and oppression.

If we keep in mind the Aryan and Slavic character of the Poles, there still remains the question, what distinguishes the Poles among the Slavs? Such a nation, which had a long and glorious history, is likely to have developed its own peculiarities. All the general Slavic traits are intensified in the Poles, because of their central position, which exposed them less to exclusive foreign influence than their western, eastern or southern neighbours, and awakened their national consciousness more fully in intercourse with so many foreign influences. The Poles are passionately attached to the cultivation of their soil and to its freehold property. They are intensely religious, gay, hospitable, like the other Slavs. Their cult of womanhood is extraordinary and manifests itself also in the religious cult of the Virgin Mary, who in Poland has more shrines and miraculous images than in any other country. The most famous of these shrines is at Częstochowa, and sometimes as many as half a million pilgrims have come there in one day, while the most renowned of such places of pilgrimage in France, Lourdes, does not receive as many pilgrims in a whole year. Women as heroines were celebrated in Poland from the mythic times, when Queen Wanda sacrificed herself and suffered death rather than accept a forced marriage. Queen Jadwiga won Lithuania and Ruthenia by the sacrifice of her romantic love for an Austrian prince, and she fought at the head of the Polish army, like many other women in our revolutions, among whom Emilia Plater became famous through a poem of Mickiewicz. The Poles worship their women, and readily accept their advice in the most important affairs.

The national feeling and the struggles for independence are greatly sustained by the enthusiasm of women. This influence of their women proves the manliness of the Poles, and it would be a mistaken inference to see in it a mark of effeminacy. The more perfect a man is as a man, the more he appreciates perfect womanhood.

A distinctive feature of the Pole, which separates him from other Slavs, is the predominance of will over emotion, leading in its extremes to obstinacy and love of adventure, but on the other hand explaining his originality and his creative genius in art. The greatest and latest literary revival experienced among mankind was the Polish literary period between 1832-1848, in which more masterpieces were produced than in centuries of past national life, and very likely more than in centuries to come. This literary activity expressed the creative originality of the Polish mind at the same time that Chopin was composing his music, and a generation before Matejko started his great school in painting. In that creative originality the Poles stand first among the Slavs, and their poetry is a poetry not so much describing emotions as exhorting to action.

The Poles, being more homogenous than other Slavs, as they had never been conquered or dominated by other nations, were able to develop in greater purity the original Slavic features, and their life and legislation will remain a model of Slavic life, towards which the other Slavs will strive, as they emancipate themselves from foreign influences and come to the full consciousness of their Slavic mission and character.

The Polish love of liberty implies the liberty of others. In no other country had foreigners such privileges and liberties as in Poland. Jews, Gypsies, Tartars lived free and happy in the Polish Republic, and slavery was unknown in the sense in which it existed both in Russia and Prussia, as even Moltke acknowledges. We never had in Poland anything approaching the famous German wars of peasants (*Bauern-Kriege*). The Reformation found many adherents in Poland, but did not lead to religious wars, as in Germany, France, and other coun-

tries. In 1645 the Protestants and the Catholics arranged a public discussion in Thorn, called *colloquium charitativum*, but this did not lead to strife. The great individualism of the Poles does not prevent them from recognizing the rights of others. Anti-semitism has never been strong in Poland, and in 1862 Jewish rabbis took part with Catholic bishops and Protestant pastors in the great national funerals and demonstrations.

The Poles have shown in the past, and they show also at present, whenever they have an opportunity, their great political talents. A constant improvement was taking place in their constitution from 1347 to 1791. A great part of the time of the diets was spent on such improvements. The last great national act of Polish life was a new constitution in 1791, enlarging the circle of those who had a right to take part in national life. This Polish constitution is the oldest written constitution in Europe, and preceded all the constitutions now in use anywhere except the English and the American. In one department of public life the Poles have been the first to give an example which has been followed by other nations: they inaugurated in 1773 the first ministry of public national education, which brought under one administration all the schools of the country and transformed in one generation the state of public opinion, so that it most efficiently prepared the famous constitution of the 3rd of May, 1791.

More than once Polish statesmen, when they had the power, have ministered to the prestige of Austria, and it was a Pole, Gołuchowski, who induced the Austrian emperor, Franz Joseph, to carry out in 1860 his promises of 1848, by granting to his subjects a constitutional government formed under a Polish prime minister. It was likewise a Pole, Dunajewski, who in Austria produced the first parliamentary budget without a deficit, after a century of chronic financial distress. The great political talent of the Poles has been also shown in their extension of their Polish democratic liberties to a territory six times as large as their original ethnographic limits, and in their fine

discrimination, which made them grant different laws and liberties to the various nationalities inhabiting the great Republic.

It must never be forgotten that Poland was the largest democratic Republic in Europe since the fall of the Roman Republic, and that it was in past centuries the refuge of all advanced reformers, persecuted in their own countries. The Hussites fled to Poland from Bohemia after their defeat at the White Mountain and felt safe once they had crossed the unguarded frontier of the mighty free Republic. The Armenians came from the Caucasus in large numbers, when they could no longer bear the yoke of the Turks, and they were given their own bishopst and archbishops, who even now continue under Austrian government their separate jurisdiction.

The Poles organized political liberty not only for themselves, but for all who sought protection on their soil. Their nobility was not a class, formed by conquest, like the nobility of other countries, but a semi-religious open brotherhood, increasing to the extent of more than three hundred thousand families, united for the defence of their country against the enemies of Poland, and for the protection of Europe against the enemies of Christ. Whoever had given proofs of valour and desired to fight, could easily be received into this order, and those who proved themselves unworthy, were expelled, despised, and deprived of their privileges. A nobleman was forbidden to take part in lucrative business lest he should lose his integrity, and if he sold other things than the products of his soil, he ceased to be a nobleman. The ultimate and acknowledged ideal was to change into true noblemen all the inhabitants of the country, and to unite them in an ideal fraternity and equality. Foreign influence spoiled this primitive educational character of the Polish *szlachta*. Now after a century and a half of common suffering for Poland under three oppressive governments, the ideal is fulfilled and all Poles, Lithuanians and Ruthenians, who are ready to fight for their independence, are noblemen, recognized as equals by the noblest and proudest families.

This idea, that a higher rank implies first of all greater duties and not only privileges, permeates the whole Polish commonwealth, and among the most splendid monuments of Polish life and political art are the great « *volumina legum* », embracing the decisions of the Polish diets, since 1347, published in eight volumes in 1732. This work being partly in Latin, is accessible to all scholars, and nobody has studied it without being struck with admiration for the Polish political genius. No other Slavic nation can show such a record.

There is in the Polish mind a synthetic tendency, which makes the Poles natural and impartial judges of the achievements of the six great nations that have preceded them in scientific, literary and artistic activity : the French, English, Dutch, Italians, Spaniards and Germans. While all these nations have developed with little mutual influence, the Poles are accustomed to study the work of other nations before they undertake to supplement it. A Polish scholar is usually much better acquainted with German, English, French, and Italian literature, than are, for instance, French or English scholars with German literature. An educated Pole has travelled all over Europe and speaks the chief languages. He compares many individual and national views before he elaborates his own. This synthetic spirit has shown itself most clearly in the latter part of the XIXth century ; but the first great glimpse of a true Polish mind, rising above the prejudice and limitations of his time, was that of Copernicus, a disciple of the old Polish University of Cracow. It is peculiarly significant and characteristic that it was a Pole who rediscovered the old Greek truth about the subordinate position of our earth in our solar system. We owe to a Pole the knowledge that the source of light is more powerful than the soil on which grows our daily bread. The origin of species was taught in Poland before Darwin by Śniadecki at the University of Wilno, at the beginning of the XIXth century, and one of the disciples of this great naturalist was the famous poet and thinker, Słowacki, who proposed, about 1840, long before Spencer, a theory of evolution which

is now wonderfully confirmed by the latest developments of biological science¹. The discovery of the chemical identity between the green chlorophyll of the plants and the red haemoglobin of the blood, was made by the Polish chemist Marchlewski. The most general problems of science are those which interest most the Polish mind. No wonder that in the discovery of radium a Polish chemist took a prominent part, Madame Curie Skłodowska.

This synthetic spirit of the Poles has been also shown in the field of historical research. They have had an important share in the vindication of the European origin of the Aryan race². And if the total amount of Polish discoveries is much less than that of several other nations, this is due to the great difficulties created by their political situation, which makes the life of the Poles, the oldest settled nation of Europe, now so disturbed and precarious.

But doubtless the share of the Polish spirit in the progress of human thought will grow with their independence, and always in the direction in which Copernicus started : always enlarging the general horizons of thought beyond former limitations. It is well within this line of Polish activity that the Poles alone among the nations of Europe have created a religious and philosophical doctrine, according to which they have not *only* rights but also duties towards the other nations, a mission to fulfil for the welfare of mankind. This doctrine, called *messianism*, has been often perverted and ridiculed, as though the Poles considered themselves a privileged nation, deserving the first rank in mankind. But the true meaning of *messianism* is that every nation ought to have a mission and not be lost in national egoism. The Polish *messianist* sees in the future a cooperation of nations instead of the present competition of states.

If the chief nations of western Europe, Frenchmen, Germans, English, Italians, Poles, were perfectly organized as nations, so

1. *Id.*, Henri Bergson, *L'Évolution créatrice*, Paris, 1907.

2. *Id.*, the works of Bogusławski.

that they could always by their national organizations protect each of their members in his rights against every wrong, then the limits of states, custom-houses and even state governments might become superfluous.

The conception of a nation is a spiritual conception. The nation is a society of souls sharing the same aspirations. The state is a material necessity, produced by the imperfection of citizens and based on the limits of a territory. The state is aggressive; the nation will not claim souls which do not belong to it by nature.

The state should be the material expression or the body of a nation, as it is now in Norway, Sweden, England, France and Italy, but not in Germany, nor in Austria, nor in Russia. Poland went further in this distinction between nationality and state than any other country, because in the Polish Diet the representatives of the lost provinces had seat and voice. The national unity was independent of territorial limits. Thus it occurs also now that in all Polish brotherhoods or associations the subjects of foreign states, if they are Poles, are always admitted; and such a presence and participation of delegates from Prussian and Austrian Poland at a great meeting of the National School Association (*Macierz*) in Warsaw led the Russian Government to suppress this association, which in one year had founded hundreds of schools.

It could be shown, in numerous instances, that this feeling of national unity apart from boundaries, this national consciousness, similar, though in a certain way opposed, to what certain Americans call cosmic consciousness, is the most characteristic and significant peculiarity of the Poles. It introduces into mankind something new, a spiritual relation superseding old territorial links. The national consciousness has awakened fully since the partition of Poland, in many countries, as in Serbia, Belgium, Italy, Greece, Roumania, Bulgaria. It has led to the emancipation of Hungary from Austria, Norway from Sweden, Belgium from Holland. And all these nationalities are much smaller and less important politically than the Polish nation,

which occupies the very centre of Europe. Moreover in Poland the national consciousness had been wide awake for centuries before the partition.

If cosmic consciousness is not an illusion, it is the negation of national limitations and therefore opposed to them. But to those who have no national consciousness, the craving for unity with the universe is the last limit of an ascending progress beyond individual narrowness. National consciousness is a reality for numberless Poles, while cosmic consciousness is the privilege of a few, and at intervals, for they generally awake under certain conditions from this cosmic dream to their particular needs and interests. But the Poles are known to live a national life in every moment of the life of certain individuals, and this transformation, this new state of consciousness, is the subject of one of the greatest works of our national poet Mickiewicz, *The Ghosts*. The intensity of national feeling is the key to many facts of Polish life and Polish history, which can never be understood by those who know only the relation between people and state, citizen and government.

Many patriots in other countries are really patriots of their state and not of their nation. Such is the patriotism of those Russians who dream of the greatness of Russia as a limitless expansion over territories conquered and administered by force under the direst oppression of their original inhabitants. English imperialists also call themselves patriots and seem to be unaware of the danger of losing the most valuable acquisitions of their national life in contact with so many subjects of inferior race. The Poles have never undertaken conquests; have never sought the greatness of their nation in territorial expansion; have never waged wars except in self-defence. Their national life is limited to themselves and to those who voluntarily accept a participation in their mission, like the Lithuanians and those « Russians » and « Prussians » who were citizens of the Polish Republic. Provinces, and even kingdoms, besought the favour of being incorporated into the Polish Republic, and were not accepted. If in Poland political ambition had prevailed, Bohemia

and Hungary, as well as the whole east of Russia, would have belonged to Poland, together with Livonia and Roumania. Such an empire could no longer have been the Polish Republic. Even now the Poles, if they gave up their national aspirations and accepted a share in the totally different ambitions of Russia, could easily obtain the control of the whole Russian empire and conquer Europe. But few are found to serve the Tsar, while many have faithfully served Austria within the last generations. It is because there is no possible conciliation between the national aims of Poland and Russia, while Austria seemed to become a federation of nations, similar in certain respects to the old Polish Republic.

The mission of Poland has been for centuries to protect Christian Europe against new invasions of Oriental barbarians, and its mission in the future is to introduce Christian feelings into social and political relations, while the present international principle of "non-intervention" in the affairs of foreign states is a negation of the rights of nationalities and of the duties of Christians, who must defend their faith regardless of frontiers, wherever it is oppressed.

The Polish character can best be understood from the prominent features of Polish history. The oldest ruler whom tradition mentions, the ancestor of many kings of Poland, Piast, is said to have been elected unanimously by the people. It is true that his descendants ruled in Poland for several centuries, but again and again their rule was confirmed by the will of the people in large gatherings, and they had no power by right of birth alone. It was simply a prudent measure to elect kings among those who descended from kings. The growth of liberties in every respect was due to voluntary concessions of the stronger party — the king to nobles, the nobles to peasants, the Catholics to Protestants, the Christians to Jews — not to violence and bloodshed. The Poles have served Europe and Christianity more than once, against their own national interests, at the request of Roman Popes. Thus King Władysław perished at Warna in 1444 in a war undertaken at the instigation of the

Pope, when Poland had concluded an advantageous peace with Turkey and had no need to incur new risks. His death and defeat greatly prejudiced Poland. Sobieski defended Vienna in 1683 against the Turks and concluded the long warfare by a definite victory, at a time when Poland had nothing to fear from the Turks and everything to gain by the defeat of its ambitious neighbour, the rising Austrian dynasty. Austria showed her gratitude a century later by participating in the partition of Poland. It was against the interest of Poland to grant to the younger line of Brandenburg a right of succession in Prussia, which lawfully belonged to the Republic, and there was no necessity for such generosity, nor had the prince of Brandenburg any power to obtain such a privilege by force, when in 1525 he publicly swore allegiance to his uncle the King of Poland. Two and a half centuries later, his successor invented the scheme of Poland's partition. In 1609 the Polish general Żółkiewski conquered Moscow, and the Muscovites, tired of their own tyrants, asked him to give them a Pole as king. This was contrary to the unselfish and religious policy of Poland ; and the Poles, though superior in power to the Muscovites at that time, left them in fairness all liberty to elect one of themselves as their tsar. This decided the fate of both countries for centuries to come. The unaggressiveness of Poland has encouraged the aggressiveness of its neighbours : all the three states which partitioned Poland were once at the mercy of the Poles, and owed great debts of gratitude to the Polish nation, a " knight among nations ", as Van Norman calls her.

In all these facts we see the Polish character—no political ambition, no greed of power, no pleasure in oppressing others ; but love of liberty, of our own liberty and of the liberty of others, fairness in politics, devotion to faith and fair dealing even to giving up a conquered empire, and tolerance towards all creeds and opinions within our own territory.

In Poland we have seen the greatest complexity of mutual relations among twenty-two nationalities and still the greatest intensity of national consciousness within Polish souls. Poland,

though under the influence of Roman law, religion and culture, was never conquered by the Romans and could thus preserve older traditions than either Germany or France, the fields of so many conquests. The Polish language is of the older Aryan type, like Greek and Latin, not of the more simplified modern form like English, French, German or Italian. It has a wealth of vocabulary and grammar far exceeding that of the Romanic or Germanic tongues, and has changed less in the last thousand years than other modern languages in half that time.

Poland has prepared the democratization of Europe, which is now advancing from America. It has elaborated the unique political system that corresponds to the Slavic spirit, and that will ultimately prevail with some necessary improvements, when English parliamentarism and imperialism are discarded.

No deep understanding of the general mission of the western Aryans is possible without a consideration of the history and the present national life of the Poles, who are multiplying at a more rapid rate than any other nation of Europe and will soon outnumber all their conquerors. They can afford, besides increasing constantly the proportion of the Polish element in Russia, Austria, and Prussia, to send every year into America a working army of more than a hundred thousand souls, more than the total immigration of English, Germans, and French, taken together.

No European novelist has been more read in America than Sienkiewicz ; no actress has had greater and nobler fame than Modjeska, no musician is better known than Paderewski—all of them fervid Polish patriots.

It is interesting to know how this nation of creative and synthetic genius, which has no diplomatic representation, no territory on the maps, no voice in the concert of Europe, lives at home under three different governments and how it grows so rapidly under increasing oppression. The Polish capital, Warsaw, with its 900,000 inhabitants, is larger than most capitals of Europe. Warsaw is a larger city than Madrid, Naples, Rome, Lisbon, Athens, Christiania, Stockholm, Brussels, or Amster-

dam, and commands the commerce between East and West. The Poles, situated in the centre of Europe, are more numerous than most nations of Europe : their number exceeds that of the Spaniards, Greeks, Irish, Scotch, Dutch, Portuguese, Swedes, Danes, Norwegians, Roumanians, Bulgarians, Serbs, Bohemians, or Hungarians ; and they increase much more rapidly than Frenchmen, English, Germans, or Italians, who alone at present still exceed them in numbers in Central and Western Europe, outside Russia.

As soon as artificial competition between states is supplanted by a natural national cooperation, the material importance of the Poles will necessarily correspond to the unsurpassed intensity of their national life. And the partitions of Poland, which were intended to destroy the Poles and to transform them into Prussians, Russians, and Austrians, have only increased this intensity to a degree previously unknown, and have enabled the Poles to prepare in the darkness of oppression for their redeeming mission of liberty and fraternity, for the solution of those social and political problems which were created long ago by the Roman conquests and can be solved only by a nation that has never been conquered.

Militarism, increasing public debts, religious persecutions, political and economical tyranny, which are the diseases of Europe, were unknown in Poland. Happiness was provided for all classes and races of people to a greater extent than has ever been provided elsewhere.

And it is easy to show that even now greater happiness and freedom can be found in Polish souls than in any other. The explanation lies in that intense spiritual unity of the nation, which makes every joy universal and destroys the grief of individuals by the exaltation of the most radiant common hopes. Our hopes refer not only to the future of Poland but to that of mankind.

The cause of Poland is and will remain the cause of liberty throughout the globe. And the story of how Poland lost its independence, and how it struggles to regain it, provides one of the most instructive lessons of human history.

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